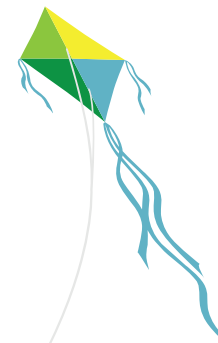


Parks, Open Spaces and Sporting Facilities **STRATEGY**



RANGITIKEI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Vision For Rangitīkei

*He oranga whenua
He oranga Tāngata
He oranga wairua
Tihei mauriora*

*If our land is cared for
If our people are looked after
If the spirit is strong
We can build a better future for all
Let there be life*

Vision For This Strategy

Rangitīkei is a district with vibrant and diverse leisure opportunities based on its natural environment, quality infrastructure, strong traditions, engaging and productive community partnerships and timely innovation.

Providing spaces and places where the community gathers, communicates and enjoys recreational opportunities. It is where community happens.

Principles



The Council will make decisions based on strategy and a framework
Deliberate and informed decisions that are understood and adhered to



Rangitīkei Equity Principle
Fairness across the district



The 10-minute walk
Simple and accessible



Te Taiao - Environmental health and sustainability overarching
First, the natural environment



New initiatives 'Needs' must be proven
Investment based on proven and sustainable need



New Initiatives must address ongoing asset maintenance cost
Helping council help more initiatives



New initiatives must be multi-functional, holistic and connected.
Adding value and increasing participation

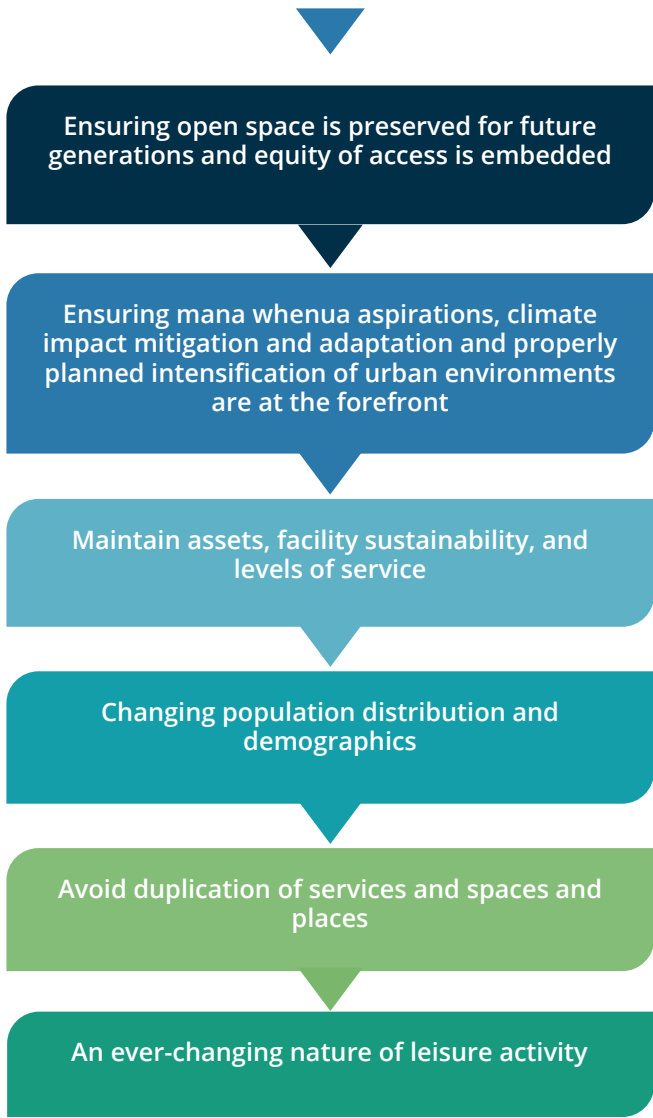


Health in all policies approach
Health beyond the health sector – health for and by all



Tāngata Whenua
Understanding what partnership is and how partnership is reflected in this strategy is central to the success and sustainability of the actions that derive from the strategy particularly related to open space of the actions that derive from the strategy.

Why Do We Need a Strategy?



Introduction

The Rangitikei District Council (Council) has embarked on developing a Parks, Open-Space and Sporting Facilities Strategy (the Strategy). The strategy's primary purpose is to ensure

- The Council makes decisions on developments and suggestions received from the community, within a framework that ensures duplication is avoided and all costs are considered at the outset.
- That parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities reflect and add to the outcomes of the Council Strategic Vision for the District.
- That current and future parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities match, as accurately as possible, the 'needs' of the community now and into the future.
- That Council, in partnership with the community, develops and maintains parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities in a way that is financially prudent and sustainable.
- That environmental health and sustainability is considered at each and every step.
- That green spaces are held in stewardship for future generations, recognising the truth that once land is lost it is never recovered.
- The future generations in Rangitikei live, work and play in a place that Promotes Cultural, Environmental And Community Wellbeing.

Purpose

In 2002 the Local Government Act encouraged councils to take a comprehensive approach to identify desired wellbeing outcomes and to encourage a co-ordinated approach to achieving those agreed outcomes. In 2021 an 'update' of that legislation re-introduced the four wellbeings and once again gave councils the opportunity to be the facilitator of all things 'wellbeing'.

Parks, open-spaces and sports facilities play a crucial role in contributing to a community's economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing. Proactive, co-ordinated, collaborative and integrated planning is required. This is where the Council aims to provide leadership in each of the wellbeing domains, by ensuring planning, spaces and places and community coordination remain relevant now and are future-proofed for the district's communities and generations to come.

Furthermore, Council requires a strategy that sets out solutions for the community, that can separate 'needs' from 'wants', and can be used as a comparison between competing and alternative projects that are presented to the Council for funding in the Long-Term Planning process.

This is a 30-year strategy - it is focused on future provision and future communities

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| VISION FOR RANGITĪKEI | 2 | | |
| VISION FOR THIS STRATEGY | 2 | | |
| PRINCIPLES | 2 | | |
| WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY? | 3 | | |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 | | |
| PURPOSE | 3 | | |
| | | | |
| 1. PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND SPORTING FACILITIES | 6 | | |
| Relationship to community wellbeing and the Wellbeing Framework. | 6 | | |
| A civil community is important to Rangitīkei | 6 | | |
| An active community is important to Rangitīkei | 6 | | |
| Wellbeing is important to Rangitīkei | 7 | | |
| | | | |
| 2. THE STRATEGY - FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPLES | 8 | | |
| Decision Making – based on the strategy and the framework | 8 | | |
| Vision for this strategy | 8 | | |
| Principles that guide this strategy | 8 | | |
| Decision Making Criteria | 14 | | |
| He ra ki tua Horizons Region Spaces and Places Plan for Sport and Recreation | 14 | | |
| Rangitīkei Parks, Open-Space and Sporting Facilities Decision Criteria | 15 | | |
| Rangitīkei District Council Decision Criteria | 16 | | |
| | | | |
| 3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT | 17 | | |
| Relationship to Council strategies and spatial plans | 17 | | |
| Housing Strategy | 17 | | |
| | | | |
| | | Economic Development Strategy | 17 |
| | | Destination Rangitīkei Strategy | 17 |
| | | Heritage Strategy | 18 |
| | | Long Term Plan 2021-31: | 18 |
| | | Rangitīkei District Plan: | 18 |
| | | Town Centre Plan: | 18 |
| | | Pai Tawhiti Rangitīkei Beyond – Community Spatial Plan: | 18 |
| | | Community and Leisure Asset Management Plan 2021- 2031: | 18 |
| | | Relationship to other external documents | 18 |
| | | | |
| | | 4. CURRENT PROVISION | 19 |
| | | Future Provision to meet proven demand | 20 |
| | | Challenges and opportunities | 21 |
| | | | |
| | | 5. THE ROLE OF COUNCIL AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN THIS STRATEGY | 24 |
| | | Council current and possible roles | 24 |
| | | Statutory body | 24 |
| | | Provider/Funder and Asset Manager | 24 |
| | | Planner | 25 |
| | | Supporter | 25 |
| | | Co-ordinator of opportunities | 25 |
| | | Advocate | 25 |
| | | | |
| | | 6. COMMUNITY CURRENT AND FUTURE ROLES | 26 |
| | | Schools, Department of Conservation (DOC) and Marae | 26 |
| | | | |
| | | 7. WHERE TO FROM HERE? | 28 |

1. **PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND SPORTING FACILITIES**

For the purposes of this section the following definitions apply.

Parks

Outdoor spaces owned and/or administered by the Council that are open and available for public use. Parks are environments people can use for recreation and play activities including playgrounds, sports grounds, walkways and community gardens. Local parks provide places for communities to relax, socialise and play.

Open-Spaces

Places where people can access the natural environment to engage in a variety of activities. Open spaces include 'green space', rivers, lakes and beaches, town centres and streets, tracks and trails, cycleways and walkways. They are places which help to establish connections and linkages where people can move through, visit, congregate and enjoy respite and connection with nature playgrounds, sports grounds, walkways and community gardens. Local parks provide places for communities to relax, socialise and play.

Sporting Facilities

Generally built or maintained infrastructure on council owned parks and reserves, which are designated areas specific to active recreation and sporting pursuits.

RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND THE WELLBEING FRAMEWORK.

Providing spaces and places where community congregates, communicates and recreates – where community happens.

A CIVIL COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT TO RANGITĪKEI

If civil society and community is the web of social relationships through which we pursue joint endeavours then what better platform can a council provide than opportunities for community engagement, spaces and places for play, active recreation, sport, contemplation and societal activities. Civil society, and the social capital that accrues to a community through mutual association and effort is the currency by which a community grows, strengthens and becomes self-sustaining.

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT TO RANGITĪKEI

An active community advocates policy, development, urban design, programmes and destinations that encourage people to venture out, to walk, run, cycle, skate, scooter, saunter and generally engage in active and/or passive recreation in and outside of the home. This, in turn, contributes to a healthy community and community wellbeing; healthy physically, healthy emotionally, healthy stocks of social capital, and healthy attitude toward the community in which they live, work and play.

Central to an active and healthy community is the concept of safety – safety in the home, on the street, in the park, at work, on a bus or a bike, in the water. Unless the community has a sense of safety, the idea of being active and healthy is removed – and without similar considerations for young people and where they like to 'hang-out' we will not achieve a future of active healthy young adults.

Council believes that community parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities, 'spaces and places,' need to enable communities to self-activate in these spaces, whether built, green, blue, grey or the links in-between.

Research identifies three key social dimensions of place based social relations in urban neighbourhoods: social, democratic and friendly/safe. This strategy suggests that over the next 30 years, the Council will become an enabler for these social dimensions through provision of parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities, whilst the community become the activators of those spaces in a manner that makes each space 'fit-for-purpose' to each user at the time of use.

Trends identify that social capital and civil society are enhanced when opportunities are provided for multi-generational and inter-generational congregation (note recent examples of early childhood centres being developed in or near aged-care facilities). Creating spaces where 'activity' can occur, through self or programmed activation, and designing these spaces to be flexible in design and scope, facilitates the greatest opportunity for congregation. The Council also recognises it has a role to play by providing opportunities for 'social bridging' by providing spaces where different demographics and interests can come together to learn, interact and respect the many faces that make up the community.

WELLBEING IS IMPORTANT TO RANGITĪKEI

Parks, open spaces and sporting facilities address the Aotearoa New Zealand Wellbeing Framework in many ways including:

SOCIAL

Providing opportunities for social bridging, for interaction between different communities, for safety and for engagement. Contributing to improved social and mental health outcomes and a reduction in inequitable health outcomes between communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Providing opportunities for sustainable development, climate and biomass loss mitigation and adaptation projects, carbon-offsetting and improving liveability through reducing ambient temperatures with increasing canopy cover and aiding the preservation of bird and wildlife species.

CULTURAL

Providing opportunities for re-establishment of indigenous species and interpretation and storytelling of cultural significance throughout the district. Ensuring indigenous biodiversity preservation informs future plans and growth.

ECONOMIC

Provides opportunities for economic development through open-space workplace training, growth and supply of plants and assets locally sourced, provides ongoing impetus for regenerative tourism enterprises. Addresses how economic activity can generate the employment and wealth necessary to provide many of the requirements that make for social wellbeing, such as health, financial security, and equity of opportunity



¹Jan Gehl's (2010) work on quality of the public realm in cities is recommended.

2. THE STRATEGY - FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPLES

This strategy provides an overarching framework to guide decisions on parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities.

The framework consists of a vision and 9 core principles that will inform future decision making. It is deliberately aspirational, and the Council considers this an opportunity to be proactive in stewardship without limiting community innovation and energy.

The framework is the foundation of the Parks, Open Spaces and Sporting Facilities Strategy.

Through the framework and core principles the strategy aligns to the Rangitikei District Council's Strategic Vision of a connected, progressive and resilient community where community enjoys living, working and playing together.

DECISION MAKING - BASED ON THE STRATEGY AND THE FRAMEWORK

Historically it has been difficult for Council's professional staff and elected members to make informed decisions on opportunities presented by the community. This is not unique to Rangitikei District Council. The genesis of this strategy is to ensure that all decisions on future projects are based on an agreed set of principles and a framework for decision making. As such, all approaches to professional staff and elected members will be referred to this strategy and the framework for decision-making.

All decisions will be made deliberately and within an agreed framework to provide improved outcomes for Rangitikei communities. Consultation on specific projects, land acquisitions or facility developments will go through the usual Council processes and will provide significant opportunity for Councillor and community input – the principles below must be addressed first.

VISION FOR THIS STRATEGY

Rangitikei is a district with vibrant and diverse leisure opportunities based on its natural environment, quality infrastructure, strong traditions, engaging and productive community partnerships, and timely innovation.

Providing spaces and places where community congregate, communicate and recreate – where community happens.



PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THIS STRATEGY

This is a 30-year strategy – it is focussed on future provision and future communities. Therefore, the following core principles have been agreed by council and will guide all council and community decision-making. The core principles are outlined below:



RANGITĪKEI EQUITY PRINCIPLE

In developing this strategy, the Council recognised a common theme was ensuring equity of access between communities to an agreed level of parks, open-space and sporting facilities. This is equity not only walking distance or time from home to a 'space or place', but also equity of access to the same quality infrastructure and experience across the district. In essence, Council want to ensure each town has a high quality minimum level of service before any other 'extra' or additional developments at a district wide rates expense.

Council set a Minimum Level of Service (relating to the Rangitīkei Equity Principle) for parks, open-spaces and sporting infrastructure within a period of 5-15 years. The levels of service provide daily use opportunities implemented to elevate recreation within these areas. Examples of these levels of service, if using community wellness playgrounds as an example, include but are not limited to:

- Multi-generational and all-access playground.
- An outdoor fitness trail (associated with the playground).
- Minimum of one hard court with hoops, dimensions of which allow for two 3-on-3 basketball games to be held simultaneously.
- A basic 'wheeled' space perhaps similar to a pump track (for skate, scooter, bike).
- Stroller accessible' walkway off the road from vehicular traffic.
- Shelter (e.g. sun-shades) access to water, seating (e.g. sunken railway sleepers), and power access for charging devices.

The Council and its community can agree on what minimum levels of service should contain.

These minimum levels of service need to be achieved before any further Council funded developments take place around the district. This would ensure equity of access and equity of quality recreation infrastructure district-wide. Tamariki in Ratana would be assured of the same levels of access to equitable quality experiences as those in the larger district towns such as Marton. Once minimum levels of service are achieved further investigation into additional development of facilities can be undertaken.



THE 10-MINUTE WALK

A critical aim of the strategy is to ensure there are agreed metrics/measures and a framework in place to verify that:

- provision is accessible across communities
- provision is equitable across communities
- **'life-costs' of infrastructure and maintenance are considered** (the costs to council and therefore ratepayers) when development proposals are put to Council

Part of this equation is an understanding by staff, governance and community of the current metrics/measure and endorsement and adoption of a standard measure moving forward. This will ensure that the metrics and ongoing asset maintenance costs are a priority consideration in any decision at any level of Council.

Rangitīkei is a unique district with a rich rural history, a small population and rating base, and has advantages that come with not having a major city. Metrics used for larger cities are less relevant for the Rangitīkei district than those provided by district councils with larger population densities, and the higher use associated with city open space networks. The district has unique features that do not apply to other areas around New Zealand e.g., Rangitīkei has a lack of significant peak rush-hour traffic and also has geographically dispersed townships/villages.

The recommended measurement for Rangitīkei for this metric is a walk-time of 10-minutes from home as the average benchmark for the four main towns (Bulls, Marton, Hunterville and Taihape). With very few known exceptions, this would automatically cater for the smaller communities such as Ohingaiti, Turakina and Ratana as examples.

It should be noted that the majority of 'provision' will be on a township basis, with little evidence of residents commuting to other townships for activity (with the exception of weekend sports competitions and the new Destination Playground in Marton). The metric is deliberately 'simple' and makes assessing future park, open-space and sports facility access something that all stakeholders can understand and buy-into.

Using the 10-minute walk principle refer to the 10-minute walk maps section in the reference document for current provision across the district.



TE TAIAO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY IS OVER ARCHING

The principle of Te Taiao accepts that we are interconnected with the natural world and therefore invested in protecting the health and sustainability of the surrounding environment and ecosystems. Taiao speaks to the natural environment that contains and surrounds us. It encompasses all of the environment and its offspring. Because we are born of the earth and it is born of us, we have an eternal connection to Taiao – the earth, sky, air, water and life that is all interdependent.²

It is clearly established that human health is dependent upon environmental health. Unhealthy environments almost always lead to, and are a contributing factor, in poor public health outcomes. Unfortunately, the evidence would show that whilst humans know this to be true, we are still the single biggest contributing factor to deteriorating environmental health.

The strategy principle directs the creation of urban environments that are conducive to life, delivering a range of benefits to the environment itself as an entity,³ the surrounding community and other stakeholders including building owners, house-owners, schools and clubs.

This principle also speaks to the importance of responsible stewardship of ‘green’. Many recent cases in Aotearoa/New Zealand demonstrate the impact on food supply and security by developing land at the expense of highly productive soils. Rangitikei District Council commit to retaining and not disposing of open-space into the future as it is not known what needs there might be and recognising the universal truth once open-space and productive land is gone, we will never get it back.⁴

The aspirational parks, spaces and places of Rangitikei’s future will need to be based within the framework where it is council staff, elected members and community members responsibility to pose the question on behalf of the environment, out loud and at each step - “What about me?”

² <https://www.epa.govt.nz/te-hautu/matauranga/>

³ Biophilic Urbanism: *Harnessing natural elements to enhance the performance of constructed assets*. Angela Reeve, Karlson Hargoves, Cheryl Desha, Peter Newman, Omniya el Baghdadi

⁴ The recent RDC Property Review 2023 refers to areas of land that might be disposed of due to poor connections with other land parcels, redundant activities or are inaccessible. In this case, where disposal is agreed, Council will ring-fence any revenue and target it toward future land acquisition for open-space or sporting facilities development



NEW INITIATIVES ‘NEEDS’ MUST BE PROVEN

This principle ensures projects presented, by both council and the community, are driven by identifiable and demonstrated ‘needs’ rather than wants. It also allows council to make financial and strategic decisions in the knowledge that the outcome avoids duplication of infrastructure, and that expenditure, both capital and operational, is used efficiently and effectively.

The strategy is supported by a template for assessing ‘needs’ that must be completed at project inception by the organisation driving the development. This could be a community group/organisation/trust or potentially council. Refer to needs assessment section in the reference document.

The principle asks:

- what the need is;
- how is that need demonstrated?
- is the need justified (ie: does the need equal or outweigh the resources; investment and time, required to achieve the outcome)?
- are there alternative options of meeting the need (ie: existing infrastructure)?
- have ongoing asset maintenance costs been identified, how are they funded and by who?

Rangitikei District Council - Initial NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Project Overview (Initial Needs Assessment) - The aim of a needs assessment is to prove (or disprove) need through evidence, separating ‘want’ from ‘need’ therefore avoiding unnecessary capital costs and more importantly operational costs. A thorough assessment of need is fundamental to the success of the project for future operational and financial sustainability to both the organisation and council. Initially it is important for Rangitikei District Council to understand the following details about the project prior to undertaking a full needs assessment. The initial needs assessment (overview) of the project provides council with an understanding of the level of need, users, potential partners and collaborators, potential for co-location and design, operations, management and maintenance information. Once the initial needs assessment has been undertaken and a need has been established, if justified a FULL needs assessment would be undertaken. Please outline your response to these initial questions below.

| PROJECT NAME: | Please outline your response to these initial questions below. |
|---|--|
| Initial Needs Assessment | Response |
| 1) What is the project, please outline and give an overview ? | |
| 2) What are the key reasons (need) for developing the facility? | |
| 3) Who is the facility being built for, please list user groups? | |
| 4) How do we know it is going to be used by those groups and individuals. What quantitative and qualitative data has been used? | |
| 5) Will the facility be accessible to the public, if so how will public access the facility ? | |
| 6) Are there potential collaborators and partners involved with the project, please list who they are? | |
| 7) Is there potential for co-location or integration with other community facilities, please list facilities? | |
| 8) How is the facility going to be managed? | |



NEW INITIATIVES MUST ADDRESS ONGOING ASSET MAINTENANCE COSTS

Council recognise the ongoing and outstanding mahi and achievement of community groups who advocate and fundraise for new parks, open-spaces, playgrounds or sporting facilities on behalf of their communities.

Council also recognises it is the steward of ratepayer investment and that much of that investment must be directed toward asset maintenance and depreciation of these new assets over time. In many recent cases new projects have been suggested that haven't been through council processes and therefore budget has not been allocated for maintenance and depreciation.

For every new park, open-space, playground, sporting facility or trail there is an inter-generational cost for maintenance and depreciation, the funding for which must come from either:

- increased rates (as a new activity)
- fundraising by community (both capital and ongoing operational)
- dropping an existing facility or project and reallocating the resource

This principle directs that all new initiatives and developments are aware of the true and ongoing costs associated with maintaining community assets 'after the fundraising and building has finished'. The principle does not pre-determine the funding responsibility for all projects but does provide certainty that the community is aware of the true costs to the Council (and therefore ratepayers), at project inception.



NEW INITIATIVES MUST BE MULTI-FUNCTIONAL, HOLISTIC AND CONNECTED

This principle indicates the need and desirability for community spaces and places to be 'more than one thing'. Creating places where the community congregates, communicates and recreates – where community happens – is an important function in provision of parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities. New initiatives and investment should, at the minimum take the following into account:

- Any new builds or consideration for upgrades are in line with industry accepted best practice (Sport NZ – Community Sport and Recreation Facility Development Guide <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/community-sport-and-recreation-facility-development-guide/> as an example);
- Facility location must be strategic, along existing and potential public transport routes and adjacent to or in co-location with other active spaces and places;
- Facility location should facilitate the feeling of ownership by the entire community, and should connect to existing facilities within the town/village;
- Services are 'clustered' e.g. library, park and pool co-located to create a community bumping/connecting space;
- Spaces and places are versatile and cater for a range of diverse activities and users (existing and potential), with the ability to be flexible and physically reconfigured for a variety of users;
- Facilities should be accessible and should consider all mobilities and abilities;
- Facilities should recognise the importance of green design priorities both at, with and 'getting to' the facility;
- Infrastructure plans should align with council Indigenous Biodiversity Strategies and Climate Impact/Biomass Loss mitigation and adaptation principles;
- Consider strong and clear integration between built and open spaces and places using green design principles.



HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES APPROACH – HEALTH BEYOND THE HEALTH SECTOR

This principle is the Council’s proactive mechanism for putting community physical and mental health into the decision-making framework over the next 30 years. Whilst parks, open spaces and sporting facilities have many functions, a key role (and historically the reason local councils came into being) is about contributing to public health outcomes and addressing inequity in health outcomes between communities. The principle is that health outcomes don’t just sit within the health sector, (or put another way ‘health beyond the health sector’). If council infrastructure has a contribution to a healthy community, then it is better to be by design than by accident. Achieving good public health outcomes is everybody’s responsibility not just those agencies with an immediate health agenda such as Te Whatu Ora and National Public Health Unit.

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a tool and a concept that has its core role; to define the role of health and determinants of health in the community and the agencies that contribute directly or indirectly to health outcomes.

Good health outcomes begin with healthy policies that create healthy environments which support people to adopt healthy behaviours. This requires different sectors working together to ensure all people have equal opportunities to achieve the highest level of health:



Council has a clear and core function in enabling good health outcomes not only through its regulatory requirements and mechanisms, but also by seeing, understanding and acting in such a way that demonstrates the core role of public health facilitation. This is achieved through parks, open-spaces and sporting facility development, active transport planning, water management and waste-water treatment and clearly defined built environment and housing mechanisms (the latter through the Council Housing Strategic Plan 2022).⁵



TĀNGATA WHENUA

Understanding what partnership is and how partnership is reflected in this strategy is central to the success and sustainability of the actions that derive from the strategy particularly related to open space.

The following give heed to partnership and take inspiration from kaupapa Māori approaches to the whenua.

Informed by the principles of Te Taiao, Wairua, Mātauranga Māori, Kaitiakitanga and Kaupapa Māori approaches, **in 30-years:**

- Council alongside mana whenua, will have developed and adopted an Indigenous Biodiversity Strategy that will inform all ongoing development (preferably by 2026).
- All open-spaces, parks and sporting facilities owned or managed by Council will be inclusive of Indigenous Biodiversity, advised by mana whenua and sourced locally for each town to reflect the ‘origins’ of that specific location.
- The korero from each iwi will be prevalent in open spaces and interpretation of local history will be delivered through a combination of technology, flora and fauna and built infrastructure (e.g. Bluetooth connectivity on walks, trails and destinations). Cultural presence and the availability of cultural narrative will be available on public land and will integrate with values-based management of the whenua and awa.
- Environmental sustainability, climate impact and biomass loss mitigation and adaptation will be at the forefront of all council and mana whenua decision-making.
- Council, alongside mana whenua, will instigate a district-wide Environmental Health Index, specific to awa and maunga and locations of cultural importance.
- Mana whenua will continue to be a valued partner in all Council decision making around open space, parks and sports facility provision.
- Interpretation and korero will be given by tāngata whenua, digitally or otherwise and content management will reside with tāngata whenua.

DECISION MAKING CRITERIA

HE RA KI TUA | HORIZONS REGION SPACES AND PLACES PLAN FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

At a regional level the 2018 Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Sports Facility Plan (RSFP 2018) has been reviewed and updated with [He ra ki tua | Horizons Region Spaces and Places Plan for Sport and Recreation](#) (HRSPP 2023-33). Note at the time of writing the HRSPP 2023-33 is in draft version and has been circulated for stakeholder feedback.

The updated HRSPP 2023-33 continues to provide the strategic vision, direction and determine the priorities for the Horizons network future development of appropriate spaces and places at local community, sub-regional, regional and cross boundary levels.

The Plan builds on the foundations and learnings from the RSFP 2018 and provides a platform for:

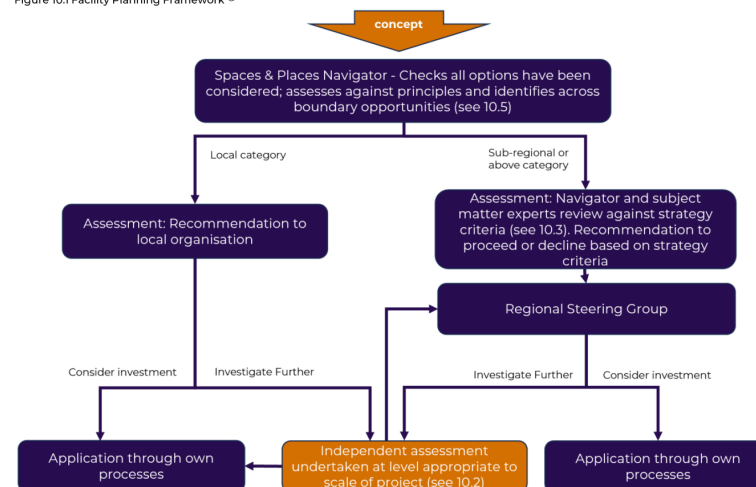
- Greater collaboration across the Horizons region, particularly between project partners
- A collaborative view of the priorities for play, active recreation and sport spaces and places (facilities) across the Horizons region
- Informing the planning for future spaces and places, including providing mechanisms to support greater consistency in the planning and decision-making process used by key organisations
- Informing council LTP processes as to the identified initiatives for future consideration
- Ensuring investment decisions are evidenced based with funding to match

HRSPP 2023-33 should not be seen as a replacement for detailed local planning on a project-by-project basis i.e. asset management plans. Rather it should guide, support, and inform detailed planning at the local community network level.

As part of the review it was evident the RSFP 2018 decision-making process was perceived as daunting. The update has looked to define roles and responsibilities of various agencies and streamline the planning and decision-making process. The updated Facility Planning Framework is outlined below.⁵

⁵ He-ra-ki-tua-Reference-Doc-for-Feedback.pdf (sportmanawatu.org.nz)

Figure 10.1 Facility Planning Framework ⁵



The Facility Planning Framework relies on a collaborative approach between the proponent group (that has the facility concept), regional sports trusts and spaces and places owners and the Regional Steering Group. The proposed decision-making process calls for a Regional Steering Group of senior officials to oversee the process in each of the Horizons North and Horizons South areas.

The proposed process applies principles and assessment criteria to proposed spaces and places investments across the region, including any improvements. The process encourages all proposed projects, big or small, to be socialised with the relevant regional sports trust for an assessment against the principles. Proponents of ideas need to be encouraged to explore what options could be implemented to achieve the desired outcome, rather than narrowing in on a particular solution.

If seen as a local project, with no opportunity for across boundary collaboration then the relevant local organisation (in most instances the council, but could also be iwi, a funding agency or others) would proceed with their own decision-making processes ⁶

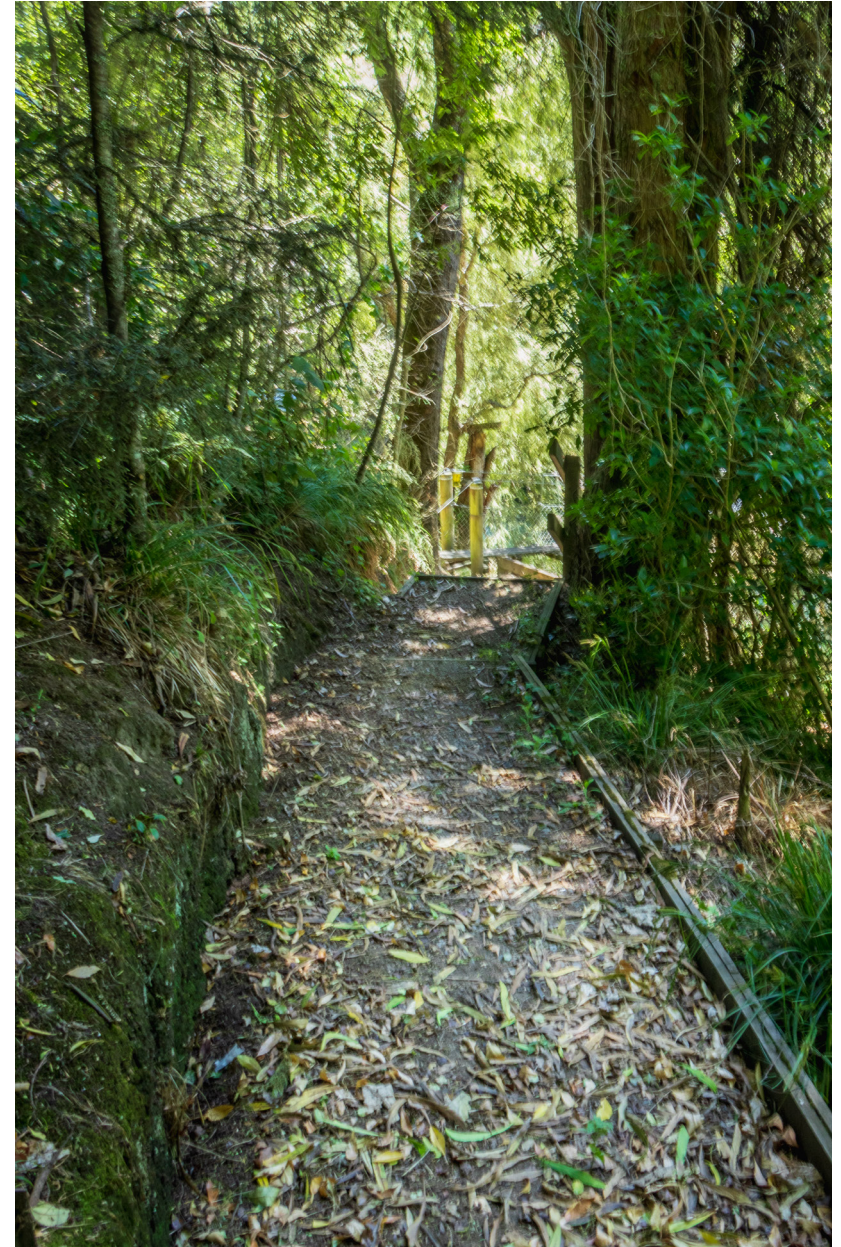
At a national level the [New Zealand Sporting Facilities Framework and Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Development Guide](#) are useful documents that help inform the decision-making processes ⁶⁷

RANGITIKEI PARKS, OPEN-SPACE AND SPORTING FACILITIES DECISION CRITERIA

Importantly in addition to the regional decision criteria **the Rangitikei Parks, Open Space and Sporting Facilities Strategy introduces local level decision criteria to support Council decision making.** The Council requires a local level framework to guide decisions on local developments and suggestions from the community to avoid duplication and to ensure all costs are considered at the outset. **The framework reflects the core principles of the strategy and will guide council and community decision-making.**

As a 30-year strategy – it is focussed on future provision and future communities. Therefore, there needs to be an agreed group of criteria that will ensure a robust, transparent, fair and consistent process in determining the type of spaces and places likely to be required, and/or the development priority given to different facilities. The criteria below are adapted from industry best practice. All projects will be measured against the agreed set of criteria and relevant weightings which have been developed and endorsed by Rangitikei District Council Elected Members. A scoring system will be used to measure projects against the set criteria.

As part of the initial decision-making process a needs assessment must be undertaken to establish and justify the need for any facility development. To assist community groups make informed decisions about the need for their proposed project, Council have developed a needs assessment tool. Refer to the needs assessment section in the reference document.



DEMONSTRATED COMMUNITY NEED (20% WEIGHTING)

The degree to which any existing or proposed facility matches the needs of the community. This includes consideration of the degree to which demand exceeds supply (once all existing facilities are being run at an optimal operational level) and the facility or proposed facility is capable of meeting the identified gap.

MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY (20% WEIGHTING)

*The degree to which a facility or proposed facility complements the existing or proposed facility network, **including avoiding any duplication of facility functions and location**. Facilities should be designed to enable multiple uses, wherever possible ensure facilities have maximum usage, be designed to adapt to future needs and changes in trends and community preferences.*

FINANCIAL AFFORDABILITY (15% WEIGHTING)

*The degree to which the community can afford the facility is crucial. **The design and construction of any facility needs to consider the full life cycle costs including maintenance, operation and eventual replacement**. The cost of facility use needs to be affordable for users.*

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL (15% WEIGHTING)

*It is important that all community facilities are accessible to the public. **They need to be equitably located within the district; physically accessible for people of all abilities**; people are aware of their availability for public use; and they reflect the social, demographic and cultural needs of the community.*

STRATEGIC FIT (15% WEIGHTING)

The degree of alignment a facility or proposed facility has with national, regional and local level facility strategies and wider strategic documents and plans, such as those concerned with urban planning, infrastructure development, tourism/economic development, and transport networks.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION (10% WEIGHTING)

***Working together with partners to develop and operate community facilities will become increasingly important**. Partnerships allow pooling of resources such as people and funding and are a key tool for ensuring an efficient and sustainable network.*

WIDER BENEFIT (5% WEIGHTING)

The degree to which the proposed investment has the potential to stimulate broader goals for social, cultural and economic development.

⁷ Adapted from industry exemplar and acknowledged best practice Tairāwhiti Community Facilities Strategic Framework 2018

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

RELATIONSHIP TO COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND SPATIAL PLANS

The Council has set out how this strategy, and other strategies in the suite of documents, fit together. It is intended that each of the main strategies are interconnected and have impacts upon each other.

HOUSING STRATEGY:

The draft Housing Strategy provides a guideline of what Council could do to address housing need across eight housing sectors in the district (emergency housing, social housing, community housing, rental housing, privately owned homes, group homes, rest homes and assisted living facilities, retirement villages and Papakōinga housing). The parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities strategy impact in the following ways:

- Understanding the trends in housing supply and need.
- Understanding, through The Rangitikei Equity Principle and the 10-minute Walk Principal, how much open-space is required and might be required.
- Understanding how new regulatory and legislative requirements might put pressure on the Council to provide green space in areas where this might traditionally, have been provided within the household footprint.
- Creating a movement toward green and carbon-neutral housing build methods.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The draft Economic Development Strategy sets out the aspirations and approach for economic development throughout the Rangitikei District. It sets out 10 priorities and four enablers. The Parks, Open Spaces and Sporting Facilities Strategy impacts in the following ways:

- Understanding the economic profile of parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities -who would pay for what, to whom and what is the return on investment in that space?

- Understanding how these spaces and places can attract local, district and regional visitors – what do they want, what are they prepared to pay for and who benefits?
- Understanding how parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities contribute to down-stream health savings through promoting physical and mental wellbeing, providing localised training and employment opportunities and local provision of infrastructure and ancillary products (timber, plants, manure, software).

DESTINATION RANGITIKEI STRATEGY:

The Council's Destination Management Plan provides the long-term vision to guide management of tourism throughout The Rangitikei District. The Parks, Open Spaces and Sporting Facilities Strategy impacts in the following ways:

- Understanding how parks and open spaces are a significant part of Rangitikei's tourism management, marketing and unique destination identity.
- Understand how the region can attract domestic and international visitors who are interested in activities on offer in these spaces
- Understanding how tourism can have a regenerative impact and contribute to the four wellbeings.
- The potential to build a sense of connection between community identity and pride-of-place for parks and open spaces with visitors.

HERITAGE STRATEGY

RDC's Heritage Strategy provides the long-term vision to guide management of heritage resources throughout The Rangitikei District. It recognises the challenges faced in heritage management throughout the district and provides a set of goals, methods and an action plan as a guide.

LONG TERM PLAN 2021-31:

The Rangitīkei Long Term Plan is the 10-year plan setting out the Council's priorities and projects and how they will be funded.

RANGITĪKEI DISTRICT PLAN:

The Rangitīkei District Plan sets out the issues, objectives, policies and rules for managing land use throughout the Rangitīkei. It sets the policy framework from the identification of a range of zones.

TOWN CENTRE PLAN:

Plans for the development and revitalisation of Taihape, Mangaweka, Hunterville, Marton, Turakina and Bulls have been developed. They identify the key action areas for each of the individual town centres.

PAI TAWHITIRANGITĪKEI BEYOND – COMMUNITY SPATIAL PLAN:

A 30-year plan for the future aligned with concepts of Thriving Communities; Healthy Communities; Unique Communities and Connected Communities. To ensure there is enough land and infrastructure available, urban areas are highly liveable, rural communities are sustainable and that the natural environment is enhanced.

COMMUNITY AND LEISURE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021- 2031:

The Community and Leisure Asset Management Plan outlines how Rangitīkei District Council will plan and manage its community and leisure assets for the next 10 years. The Community and Leisure Asset Management Plan – Strategic Summary 2021-2031, combines the district's community and leisure assets into a single document, summarising the levels of service the community can expect, key projects and risks, and the approach the Council will adopt to further develop its Community and Leisure Assets Asset Management Plans.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS

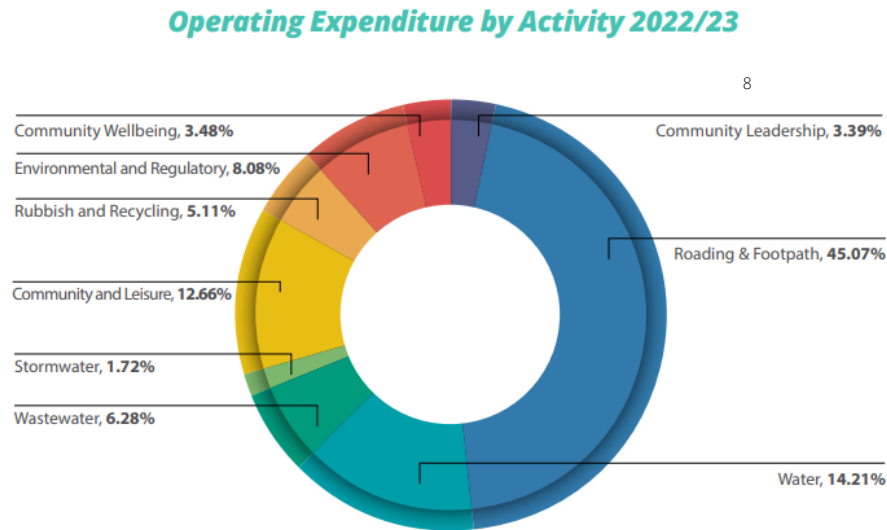
In addition to council strategies the parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities strategy aligns to a number of external strategies notably the following:

- He ra ki tua | Horizons Region Spaces and Places Plan for Sport and Recreation (HRSPP 2023-33), previous Manawatu-Whanganui Regional Sport Facility Plan (2018)
- Whanganui Open Space and Physical Activity Strategy
- Whanganui District Council Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy (2019)
- Horizons Regional Council Long Term Plan 2021-31

4. CURRENT PROVISION

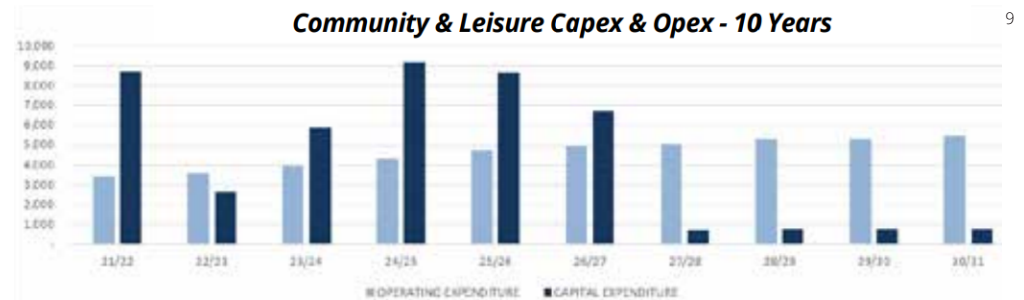
Community consultation for the strategy highlights that there are enough parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities to cater for current demand. Community, club and school consultation identifies the ageing nature of existing facilities as an issue for the next five to 30 years. How are built facilities maintained, are they needed and where does the responsibility lay for the initiative, development and costs, both capital and operational?

The 2022/23 Annual Plan indicates council spends 12.66% of its operating expenditure on community and leisure activities.⁸



8

The below graph taken from the 2021 – 2031 LTP shows the indicative estimate of projected capital and operating expenditure associated within the management of council community and leisure assets over the next 10 years. From 2027/28, year seven expenditure substantially shifts from capital to operational therefore prioritising the requirement for communities to factor ongoing operational maintenance costs into any proposed open space, parks and sports facility proposals.⁹



9

Taking into account the Rangitikei equity principle and the 10-minute walk principle, the majority of the district is currently well served by 'volume' of space.

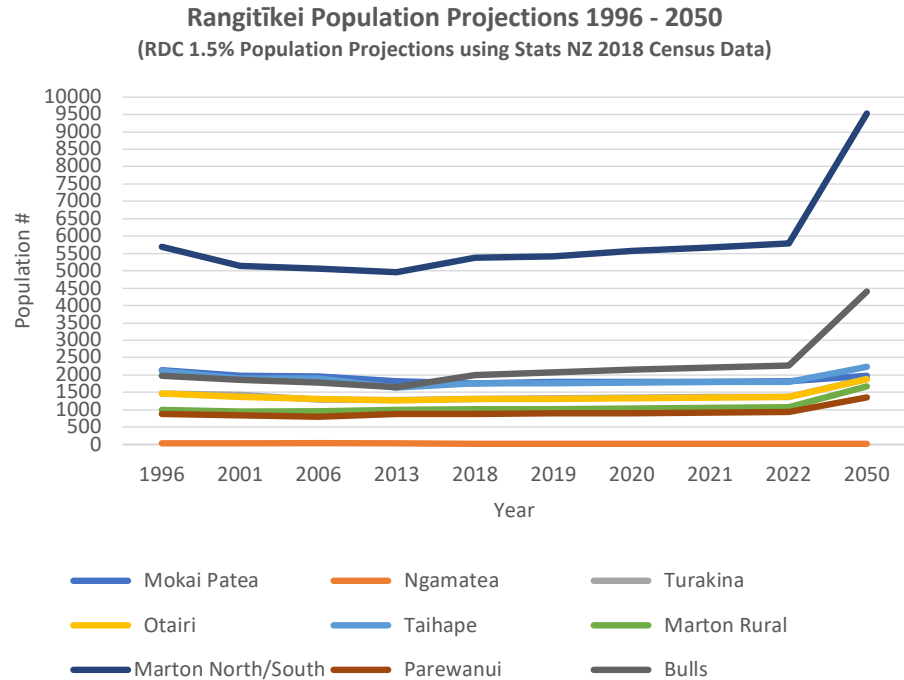
It is the Council's intention that individual parcels of land that might be required for park, open-space and sporting facility development over the next 30 years, are not highlighted in this strategy for a variety of associated reasons (potential land costs and unknown population growth given recent increases in land values and mortgage rate increases).

⁸ <https://www.Rangitikei.govt.nz/files/general/Annual-Plans/Framing-2021-2031-Annual-Plan-Web.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.Rangitikei.govt.nz/files/general/LTP-2021-31/Framing-our-Future-Long-Term-Plan-2021-2031-Adopted-8-JulyWeb.pdf>

FUTURE PROVISION TO MEET PROVEN DEMAND

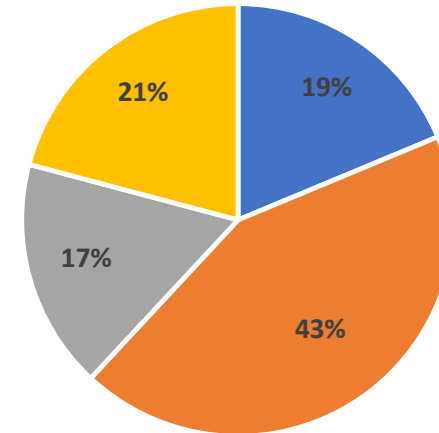
Using the 10-minute walk principle, what might be needed per town in 30 years' time?



¹⁰ With anticipated population growth of 1.5% per annum, Rangitīkei as a district will need to provide open-spaces and parks in agreed growth nodes (as an example Bulls and the Ohakea developments, new sub-divisions in Hunterville and Taihape). Feedback from sports users and Community Boards suggest that for sporting facilities it is more a focus on maintenance of ageing facilities rather than any quantitative issue.

¹⁰ RDC Spatial Plan 2023 & Statistics NZ

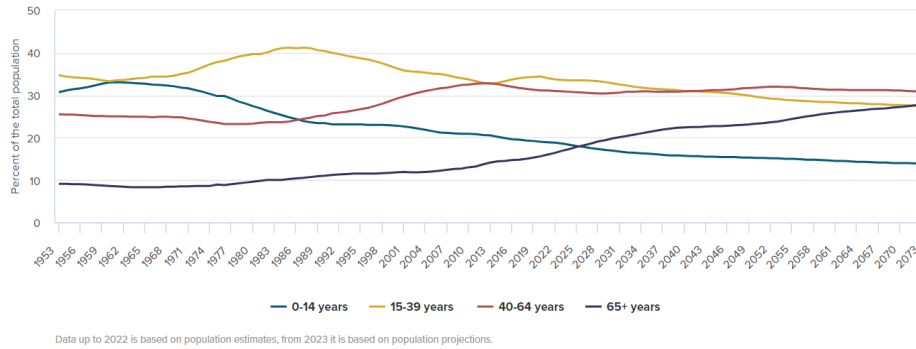
Rangitīkei Population by Age, Census 2018



■ 65 years and over ■ 30-64 years ■ 15-29 years ■ Under 15 years

With 43% of The Rangitīkei population in the 30–64-year-old bracket Rangitīkei is an attractive district for families looking to move from urban cities to the more relaxed rural lifestyles. For this reason the proposed council focus on green networks, trails and walks has obvious benefits to a growing population but also as indicators for new residents (relocating from metros) and to visitor strategy targets.¹¹

Age distribution of the population, based on the median projection, year ended June 1953–2073



While population ageing is not new it will accelerate over the next decade. Currently in New Zealand there are around 25 people aged 65+ years for every 100 people aged 15-64yrs. This is projected to increase to about 40 per 100 by 2050¹². This ageing population will have implications across New Zealand and of course the Rangitikei district over the next 30 years.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are several challenges and opportunities affecting the future provision and management of parks, open spaces and sports facilities. These include:

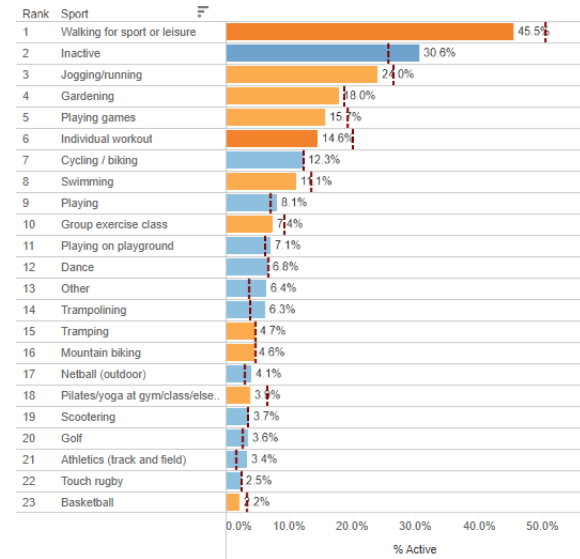
CHANGING PARTICIPATION PREFERENCES

Participation needs and preferences are changing, there is a shift from traditional club structure to the casual, pay for play opportunities such as business house touch or group fitness in the local park. Future facilities will need to be adaptable and flexible to allow for new and changing demands, particularly in the area of play and active recreation. At local level there is a need to move away from sport specific facilities and focus on multi-functional facilities that provide for a range of types of use.

With the popularity of outdoor recreation (e.g. walking, jogging/running, gardening, individual workouts and cycling) a focus on improving neighbourhood walkability and connectivity, the quality and quantity of recreational tracks and trails, the quality of parks and playgrounds and active transport infrastructure will promote positive impacts on activity across all demographics.

¹² <https://sportnz.org.nz/insights/>

Participation Rates for The Rangitikei District (Active NZ Survey)



AGING POPULATION

With projected growth in the older age group (65 year +) planning for parks, open space and facilities will need to focus on provision for this changing demographic with provision and programming of appropriate opportunities in local communities.

With an older demographic there will more than likely be increased demand for informal recreation (like walking and cycling) as opposed to traditional, competitive team sport (like netball and rugby). Accessibility to walking tracks, trails, cycleways and connected multipurpose community facilities will be required.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change will have an impact on parks, open space and sports facility provision moving forward. Sport and activity providers will need to consider adapting formats to adjust to changing weather patterns including both flooding and drought. For example, flooding and therefore drainage are already proving to be key factors in planning of parks and open spaces.

As social consciousness focuses more on the impacts of climate change globally, and particularly on how to minimise these, it will become increasingly important to reduce the dependence on cars (emissions) when planning. Provision of active transport and shared pathways will become increasingly important with the move toward more sustainable facility design as well as environmental policies and practices.

TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology to connect people with activity is ever increasing. With increased pressure on people's time, change in participation preferences and the ever-evolving COVID-19 environment, the way in which people participate in sport and active recreation has changed. One particularly positive and innovative change as a result of COVID-19 has been the use of digital technology to connect and organise activity such as zoom fitness sessions, virtual cycling tours on stationary bikes, tik-tok sessions with elite athletes and self-tracking fitness apps.

Increased appetite for this type of provision will undoubtedly influence facility demand and will make multi-functional infrastructure increasingly important.

MAINTAINING ASSETS, FACILITY SUSTAINABILITY AND SERVICE LEVELS

The Council is responsible for a large number of parks, open space and sport facility assets and is challenged with maintaining an ever-increasing number of aging assets, increasing customer expectations regarding service levels and operational sustainability.

Over time, duplication and under-utilisation of facilities will make development, operation and maintenance unaffordable. Where there is insufficient or limited sport and recreation demand to ensure the ongoing sustainability of facilities partnerships and collaboration with a variety of users should be explored.

These partnerships would link with council and community facilities such as libraries, pools, health providers and community meeting spaces.

IMPROVING COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES

With the need to replace or refurbish existing aging facilities the demand on capital and operational funding will necessitate community collaboration. Community organisations will need to work together to understand community need and priorities to negate competing for the same dollar. Collaboration will be imperative to improving provision and enhancing the sustainability of parks, open space and sporting facilities for the next 30 years.

SOCIAL (IN)EQUITY

Facility provision should reflect district demographics and support participation in sport and active recreation among high vs low deprivation communities with the focus being on equitable provision of services.

Research has shown people from high deprivation areas participate in fewer sports and recreation activities. This may mean a higher level of facility provision with appropriate programming to better meet the needs of those in high deprivation areas.

5. THE ROLE OF COUNCIL AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY in this Strategy

COUNCIL CURRENT AND POSSIBLE ROLES

The Council supports or supplies the key parks, open spaces and sports facilities in the district. Schools, marae, clubs, trusts and commercial operations supply most of the remainder. Information services and physical activity programmes are offered by a range of agencies, most with a wider Manawatu/Whanganui/Rangitikei focus and many with a district or town focus (such as Marton Aquatic and Leisure Trust, Hunterville Sport and Recreation Trust).

The main opportunities and services offered by the Council are:

- The provision, management and maintenance of open space for casual recreation, including recreational walkways, parks and reserves, informal and formal play areas, beach and river access, toilets and information;
- The provision and maintenance of many sports fields and some field facilities;
- The management of leases to clubs for the construction of clubrooms, pavilions and change facilities on public land;
- The management of roads, crossings, footpaths, street lighting and subdivision consents to maintain activity friendly environments for walking and cycling;
- The provision and facilitation of aquatic facilities;
- The facilitation of community committee provision of indoor facilities and community halls (mainly rural).

Many of these services are provided or supported through partnerships, such as financial support given by the Council to Sport Whanganui. By doing these activities, the Council supports the main leisure and activity opportunities in the district.

What then are those roles that Council can play – or facilitate and enable other agencies to undertake? Councils are required to adopt some roles and have the option of adopting others where required to achieve community outcomes. Ensuring the Council makes a decision on what role to perform in what circumstance is a primary recommended action

These roles could include:

STATUTORY BODY

Territorial authorities operate under the opportunities, obligations and restrictions provided by a range of statutes, including the Local Government Act 2022, the Resource Management Act 1991 (currently under review) and the Reserves Act 1977. Under these, and many other Acts, councils are bound to operate in certain ways, such as controlling the leasing and licensing of private or club use of reserves under the Reserves Act and planning for city growth and change through the District Plans prepared under the Resource Management Act. These are compulsory roles.

PROVIDER/FUNDER AND ASSET MANAGER

This is the highest level of support, with councils owning and operating a facility. Funding of the facility will operate in accordance with council's funding policy (private/public split). Levels of provision can vary from 'land only' to full development, or support of operations and maintenance costs. Where an asset or land is owned by a council, they have a defined set of statutory responsibilities. However, day-to-day management and promotion of use of those assets can be taken up by other agencies.

PLANNER

Before a council can serve the interests of the community it must identify what those interests are. The council therefore has a key role to play in carrying out planning that facilitates the efficient development and use of substantial community resources and ensures mechanisms are in place to meet future need. Many of these roles are also statutory responsibilities.

SUPPORTER

For agencies, clubs and groups providing leisure opportunities. The councils can do this by providing land and/or leases to a wide range of groups for activities and facilities across a range of active or passive pursuits or assisting clubs find alternative funding. Some facilities are also provided free of charge or at a nominal rental for groups to use.

Some groups providing their own land and facilities may receive rates rebates. One-off grants for facility development can be made through the council annual planning processes and a council can act as a guarantor for community clubs and organisations raising bank loans. These are optional activities.

CO-ORDINATOR OF OPPORTUNITIES

Councils are able to bring together individual groups to plan the joint development of facilities. Networking opportunities can be provided and joint promotions carried out. These are optional activities, although clearly territorial authorities are often the key facilitator.

CATALYST

Councils work closely with community groups to encourage the development of new or improved leisure facilities where gaps in provision are identified.

ADVOCATE

Councils can advocate for improved recreation and sport (mainly) facilities within the district. a council may assist stakeholder organisations attract resources by supporting groups and lobbying on their behalf. Submissions are made to national organisations such as Sport NZ and the Parks Leaders Forum (PLF) as necessary, in an attempt to ensure national policy takes into account needs and circumstances of the Rangitikei district.



6. COMMUNITY CURRENT AND FUTURE ROLES

The Rangitikei spans many communities, urban and rural. The range of agencies which represent stakeholders is therefore broad, and includes:

- Iwi
- Department of Conservation
- Sport Whanganui and Sport Manawatū
- Horizons Regional Council
- Local and regional tourism agencies
- Funding agencies (e.g. Gaming Machine Funding Trusts)
- Community and regional sport, recreation, cultural and physical activity organisations
- Related organisations (including but not limited to Transit, DHB and PHOs, Police, Physical Education NZ, Disabled Persons groups)
- Related community organisations (linked to key demographic groups, e.g. Age Concern, Youth Council)
- Related government departments (operating at the regional level, particularly those with a District presence)
- Residents' Associations
- Schools and other educational establishments (with specific focus on council/community facility partnerships)
- Commercial leisure activity providers (e.g. activity-based adventure tourism, event organisers, fitness centres).
- Elected representatives and relevant council officers
- Facility and programme providers (commercial and not-for-profit)
- 'Local' recreation clubs (e.g. the cul-de-sac walking group).

There are a number of clubs and community organisations that facilitate recreation and active leisure opportunities in the Rangitikei district. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Sports Clubs** deliver a wide range of sporting opportunity and activity.
- **Marae** provide physical, emotional and whanau support and opportunities

through marae spaces and places and also marae have and continue to provide space and place in times of community emergencies

- **Regional Sports Trusts (RSTs)** have a range of roles and work across the physical activity, sport, recreation and play sector.
- **Regional Sports Organisations (RSOs)** lead, promote and oversee particular sports in the region, RSOs have a direct relationship with sports clubs and schools providing competition and activity.
- **Environmental groups** protect and maintain the natural environment, enhance biodiversity and work towards climate change mitigation and adaption of open spaces.
- **District Health Boards** support healthy lifestyles and address public health issues.
- **Private landowners** provide access and improve connections to open spaces.
- **Commercial operators** provide a range of sport and recreation activities.

Where known these groups have been verbally or electronically consulted with by questionnaire

SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (DOC) AND MARAE

In addition to clubs and community organisations the Ministry of Education, Department of Conservation and Marae play an important role in provision of parks, open space and sports facilities.

To ensure ongoing sustainability moving into the future exploration of partnerships with these providers will be important. Partnerships can form the basis of multipurpose provision of parks, open space and/or community facilities such as hubs that link with council provision of community services such as library, community meeting rooms and small business offices, childcare, and health services.

7. Where to from here?

Through the Parks, Open Space and Sporting Facilities Strategy Council have provided a strategic framework, a vision and a set of principles that are to be considered 'deliberately' when facility developments are considered, when maintenance options are proposed and when facilities or assets reach a point at which they have outlived their original purpose and /or usefulness.

The strategy outlines a high-level approach to how council can manage all community facility proposals. The framework provides an agreed set of principles and decision-making criteria which will assist in establishing 'needs' from 'wants' and can be used as a comparison between competing and alternative projects that are presented to the Council for funding.

The strategy enables:

- Council to make decisions on developments and suggestions received from the community, within a **framework** that ensures duplication is avoided and all costs are considered at the outset.
- Parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities to reflect and add to the outcomes of the Council Strategic Vision for the District.
- Current and future parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities to match, as accurately as possible, the **'needs'** of the community now and into the future.
- Council, **in partnership with the community**, to develop and maintain parks, open-spaces and sporting facilities in a way that is financially prudent and sustainable.
- Environmental health and sustainability to be considered at each and every step.
- Green spaces to be held in stewardship for future generations.
- Future generations of the Rangitikei District to live, work and play in a place that promotes cultural, environmental and community wellbeing.

The strategy guides decision-making about the provision, development and management of parks, open space and sporting facilities to ensure the district has the necessary parks, open spaces and sports facilities in strategic locations, managed with a 30-year future in mind and most importantly to meet the needs of the wider Rangitikei community.

The Parks, Open Space and Sporting Facilities Strategy is supported by a separate **Reference Document** which details background data that underpins the strategy. In addition an **Action and Implementation Plan** outlines key actions which have been identified as part of the strategy process.